

## Against the Grain

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# Our Next Challenge: Integrating Video into the Academy

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# Against the Grain

*"Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians"*

## Our Next Challenge: Integrating Video into the Academy

by **Stephen Rhind-Tutt** (President and Founder, Alexander Street Press) <rhindtutt@astreetpress.com>

Historically, librarians and publishers have often struggled and failed in regards to media. WorldCat lists hundreds of copies and iterations of *The Illustrated London News* currently in circulation. What a pity that in the 1920s not one of these copies was weeded out to make place for the thousands of jazz records that are now lost. The Library of Congress<sup>1</sup> has documented that only 20 percent of U.S. feature films from the 1910s and 1920s survive in complete form in American archives; of the American features produced before 1950, only about half still exist.

Preservation is only one instance where the library and publishing communities have favored the printed word. Books and journals are the reigning formats. Data from the **Institute of Museum and Library Services** show that a whopping 67 percent of public libraries'

collection development spending is on print materials and just over 20 percent on all newer format materials — audio, video, DVD, and microform — combined.<sup>2</sup> Abstract and indexing databases historically omitted media. MARC records, DOIs, SFX, Z39.50 — almost all library standards are book- or journal-centric. Cataloging for shorts, documentaries, and independently produced films is at such a level that we have no way of knowing how much has been lost.

This would be bad enough if media were a marginal part of our culture and our communication. But the opposite is the case. In the two days surrounding New Year's 2013 the world posted 1.3 billion (yes, billion) images on Facebook.<sup>3</sup> Every minute, 100 hours of video are posted to YouTube.<sup>4</sup> When factoring in sites like Flickr and Picasa, it's reasonable to project that the Web will contain more than one

trillion images before 2020. Video and images are ever more important in our society.

*Ah, yes, I hear you say, most interesting, most impressive, but what does it have to do with my institution? These items are of marginal interest to the day-to-day operations of faculty. My budget is too meager to be wasted on entertainment. I have to focus on impact factors and accreditation — on the "real" world of knowledge.*

The counter to this argument is clear. For example, the 2012 Ithaka S+R survey of faculty members at U.S. four-year colleges and universities revealed that "films, artwork, or other non-textual sources" were assigned more frequently than were monographs in the social and natural sciences.<sup>5</sup> *The Chronicle of Higher Education* too reported growing instances of final papers and capstones being presented in multimedia.<sup>6</sup>

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## If Rumors Were Horses

Welcome to Charleston and the **ATG** Charleston Conference issue!

Let's start with a few mysteries. In this issue, we have a small humorous piece by the **Nemesis**. The **Nemesis** made his/her first appearance in early **ATGs** and stayed on quite a while. (no, I am not going to give you a citation! and no! I am not the **Nemesis**). This is a mystery. Can you guess who the **Nemesis** is?



Pictured is **Kayla**, daughter of **Miriam Farhoumand Long**, who just turned five.

Don't know how many of you remember or have

seen **What's My Line** on YouTube? There is even an entry in Wikipedia. **What's My Line** was a quiz show that included a "mystery guest" usually a celebrity. Got to thinking about what fun it might be to have a mystery guest author as a surprise to spice up the **Conference** (always looking for variety and a change of pace!). What do y'all think of that idea? Comments?

Speaking of books and mysteries, the marvelous **Claire Fund**, the acting director of the **Addlestone Library** (God bless her) turned me on to a mystery called *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Book Store* by **Robin Sloan**. Since I haven't had a chance to read it yet, I asked my son, **Raymond Walser** to tell me what he thought of the book. **Raymond** is a bookman (where did he learn that? spent his childhood in the library, I guess). There will be a review

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Most educators are aware of the value of video, and if they're not, the phenomenon of the MOOC is making it clearer and clearer. Video animations, simulations, expert testimony, demonstrations, and "real life footage" are critical parts of a MOOC's effectiveness. And that effectiveness has been shown to parallel the experience of attending college physically.<sup>7</sup> Yet, these items are offered without the ability to cite, without details of provenance, and typically without dates. In short, they have none of the supporting information afforded journals or books.

New technology has made media radically easier to create and disseminate. Less than ten years ago, a teacher who wished to use video for her students was faced with lining up a TV, selecting a section to present, firing up the DVD in the middle of the lesson, waiting for the FBI warning and other miscellany to pass, and so taking up valuable class time. Now she can single out just the key moments of each performance, string them together in an online playlist, and share the permanent link to that playlist on the course syllabus. Students then have the opportunity to view that full playlist online from their campus library, home computer, or mobile device and come to class already prepared to discuss and practice the material.

The value of video applies not just to teaching. Video has direct research applications in field after field from anthropology (which has an entire sub-discipline in visual studies) and performance studies (shouldn't we get to know **Shakespeare** in performance as well as we do in reading?) to history (where newsreels provide visual documentation of events), science (where video documents the results of experiments), and many more.

Fields like sociology (defined in Wikipedia as "the study of human behavior") can benefit enormously from videos. How much of human behavior is written? Even in fields as textually intense as philosophy, video can reveal biases, strengths, and weaknesses — as seen by gesture, facial expressions, and intonation — and so affect the argument. We know this to be true. Why else do we insist on conducting legal cases face to face and with video testimony?

I'm well aware of the irony of making a case for video in a printed medium. Of course books and journals are the critical elements in discourse. As the articles in this edition of **ATG** make clear, no one is suggesting that we dispense with the wonderful system we've built around the printed word. Instead, I advocate that media be welcomed into the library to take its rightful place. (And if you'd like to see me present this paper in video you can do so by visiting <http://alexanderstreet.com/ATGpresentation>.)

### Alexander Street Press's Journey

In 2006, as an avid consumer of media myself, I was acutely aware that **Alexander Street Press** might play a role in solving the problems of video. The company mission is to

"make silent voices heard," and video housed an enormous body of material that was, by and large, unheard in the academy. Streaming technology meant that the devices most were using to read could be used to listen and view. **Alexander Street's** successful history streaming music made us a natural fit to help solve technical, licensing, and other barriers to video's proliferation in academic settings.

We found a natural ally in individuals like **deg farrelly** at **Arizona State University**, **Carleton Jackson** at **The University of Maryland**, **Christopher Lewis** at **American University**, and **Kim Stanton** at the **University of North Texas**. These folks — along with **Jane Hutchison**, **William Patterson**, **Meghann Matwichuk**, and **Gary Handman** — were kind enough to join our editorial board and help advise us on a spectrum of subjects. We've worked through a host of issues, ranging from how to produce MARC records that work for video and how our content should be featured in discovery services to resolving technical problems (e.g., how to ensure streaming works with EZProxy). We've had to educate distributors and publishers on the importance of allowing libraries to own streaming rights in perpetuity. As a company it's been a learning process for us too, as we appreciate the potential of the medium and the costs associated with it. A typical monograph might cost, say, \$5,000 to produce. A standard documentary might cost 100 times that.

Perhaps the biggest lesson for us was the paradox that for almost all research and teaching the effective use of video depends on transcription. It takes 30 minutes to watch a nightly newscast. That same video approximates to 12 double-spaced typewritten pages. One can scan these pages in less than two minutes, and a computer can search them in microseconds. This technology enables researchers and teachers to incorporate video as never before.

As you'll read in this issue, many of these challenges are behind us. You'll read how **Jisc** built a database of more than 60,000 still and moving images, convincing content holders to grant new and different kinds of licenses, dealing with cataloging and metadata challenges, and finally addressing how to evaluate their product.

In another article, you'll read how **JoVE** is helping researchers perform experiments more effectively. The U.S. spends approximately six cents out of every health care dollar on medical research, the equivalent of \$30 billion each year. Despite this staggering amount, one recent independent study showed an inability to reproduce the findings in 16 out of 18 studies published as text articles — that's 89 percent of research that is functionally useless. **JoVE** responded to this dramatic need by developing a **PubMed**-indexed journal that incorporates the element of video. By publishing more than 2,500 video articles, **JoVE** has removed many of the barriers to successful scientific collaboration.

**Aaron Wood**, one of my colleagues at **Alexander Street Press**, deals daily with the question of access. For a long time, access and discovery of media in the academic setting

were partitioned from the rest of the collection. Film, audio recordings, VHSs, and DVDs were often cataloged in systems separate from the library catalog, with separate indexing specifications and a separate destination for the user, both on the Web and as a physical space.

As helpful as MARC records for video content may be, these are only one part of the current library discovery landscape. Multimedia still does not integrate well into the various utilities that libraries require to serve their users. Link resolvers, for example, are designed for journal articles and, to a lesser extent, eBooks. But despite library systems' high reliance on resolvers for delivering content, they do not integrate well with other formats, resulting in a weakened user experience. This situation is typical of most of the standards being used in libraries or developed for library content. When was the last time you thought of video and KBART together, or audio and OpenURL? And can an ISBN really be applied to video?

Of course video presents challenges. But these challenges are similar to those that librarians and publishers have already surmounted in electronic journals and books. How to catalog? How to establish provenance? How to cite? How to digitize? What preservation standards? How to index? What technologies to use? What are the copyright issues? What should we look for in licensing?

Students who entered college this September have been using YouTube for more than seven years; they've used it to give them ideas for their Lego creations and to learn how to play soccer. They've used it to view video game tips and find out what **JFK** looked like. They will continue solely to visit YouTube when they arrive in college unless we provide something better. Although YouTube is excellent in many ways, it does not provide a reliable contribution to the body of academic knowledge. It's not vetted for accuracy and only partially vetted for copyright. As with journals and books, much of the best video content isn't accessible for free. And the problem doesn't end with students; a full 43 percent of faculty members acknowledge that they have difficulty finding quality or appropriate material.<sup>8</sup> We have to provide something better. 🌱

### Endnotes

1. <http://lcweb.loc.gov/film/plan.html>
2. [http://www.ims.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/FY2010\\_PLS\\_Tables\\_19-29A.pdf](http://www.ims.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/FY2010_PLS_Tables_19-29A.pdf) via <http://www.ala.org/tools/libfactsheets/ala-libraryfactsheet04>
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6. <http://chronicle.com/article/Across-More-Classes-Videos/127422/>
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8. [http://library.nyu.edu/about/Video\\_Use\\_in\\_Higher\\_Education.pdf](http://library.nyu.edu/about/Video_Use_in_Higher_Education.pdf)